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TAGS: [IS](#) [IR](#) [AF](#) [KPAL](#) [ETRD](#) [PREL](#) [PO](#)
SUBJECT: PORTUGUESE VIEWS ON APRIL 23-24 FOREIGN MINISTERS
MEETING (GAERC)

REF: A. SECSTATE 51262

[1](#)B. SECSTATE 52623

Classified By: Dana M. Brown, Pol-Econ Officer, Embassy Lisbon
Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (U) Pol-Econ officer spoke with Deputy EU Correspondent Ana Filomena Rocha about the U.S. policy views on the Balkans, Middle East, Africa, Cuba, and trade as requested reftels a and b. Rocha replied as follows:

[1](#)2. (C) CUBA: The EU common position on Cuba will be marginal for the foreign ministers at the GAERC, according to Rocha. She described significant differences in opinion between EU members with several calling for a paragraph criticizing Cuba's political oppression. Other member states oppose the critical paragraph and claim that censuring Cuba would only be as a result of US pressure since other Latin American nations also have problematic policies. Portugal is attempting to distance itself from the debate in preparation for the EU Presidency term in July. At the same time, the EU position is unlikely to change in the near future, so Portugal is attempting to remain balanced during these discussions to avoid alienating either side in the deeply divided group. Rocha's advice was that we stay out of the debate so that it does not appear that those in favor of critical language are serving as proxies for the US position.

[1](#)3. (C) CENTRAL ASIA: Although the new EU engagement strategy is one of the crowning glories of the German presidency, according to Rocha, it is neither well-defined nor clear. She claimed that the strategy lacks specifics and institutional structure to be successful. Regarding the second human rights dialogue with Uzbekistan, Rocha dismissed the discussion as little more than a rehash of previous discussions.

[1](#)4. (U) MIDDLE EAST: Portugal sees this as a window of opportunity and hopes that the new coalition government will move forward with concrete steps in keeping with the Quartet's principles.

[1](#)5. (U) LEBANON: Portugal is quite worried about the fragile government position in Lebanon, especially in light of Portugal's upcoming presidency. Portuguese Foreign Minister Luis Amado traveled to Lebanon last summer and took an active role in pressing for an EU dialogue during the war, but does not have real ties or a history of involvement.

[1](#)6. (C) ZIMBABWE: Rocha detailed Portugal's ongoing concern regarding the human rights crisis in Zimbabwe. While the EU is ready to assist, she noted that reform must begin internally before the international community will be able to act. In particular, she lamented Mugabe's recent statements that EU sanctions have caused Zimbabwe's economic crisis. Rocha stressed that Portugal will press the EU to vigorously deny those accusations and redirect the blame where it

belongs -- back on Mugabe. Rocha noted that the UK had proposed adding new names to the EU sanctions list, which Portugal believes would increase tension without resolving any problems.
Hoffman